

THE LAST SERMON

PREACHED IN

FIRST CHURCH, CHAUNCY STREET.

MAY 10, 1868 ;

BEING THE LORD'S DAY PREVIOUS TO THE REMOVAL OF THE
CONGREGATION TO THE CHAPEL OF THEIR FIFTH HOUSE
OF WORSHIP, ON THE CORNER OF BERKELEY
AND MARLBOROUGH STREETS.

By RUFUS ELLIS,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

With an Appendix.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

1868.

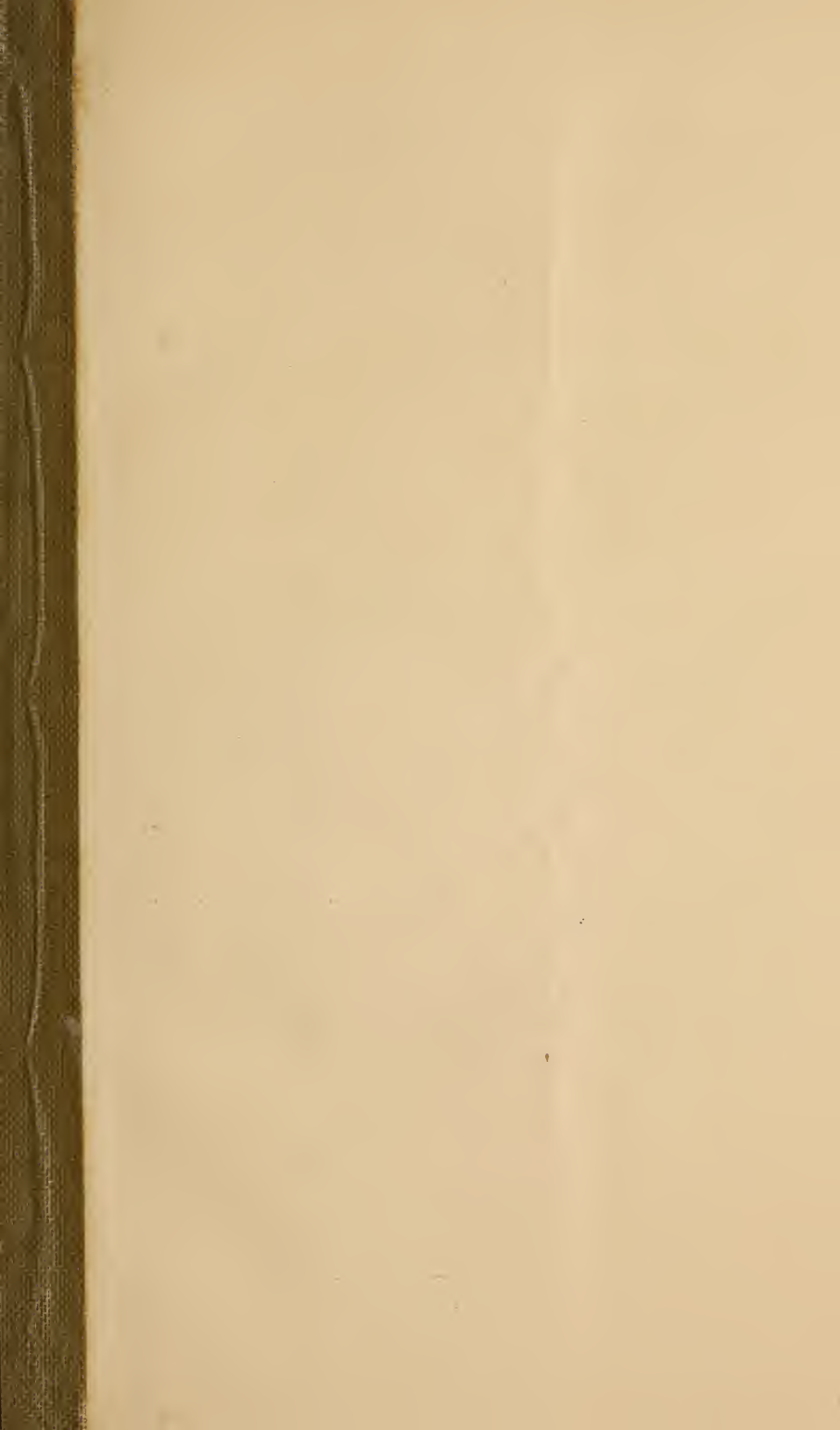
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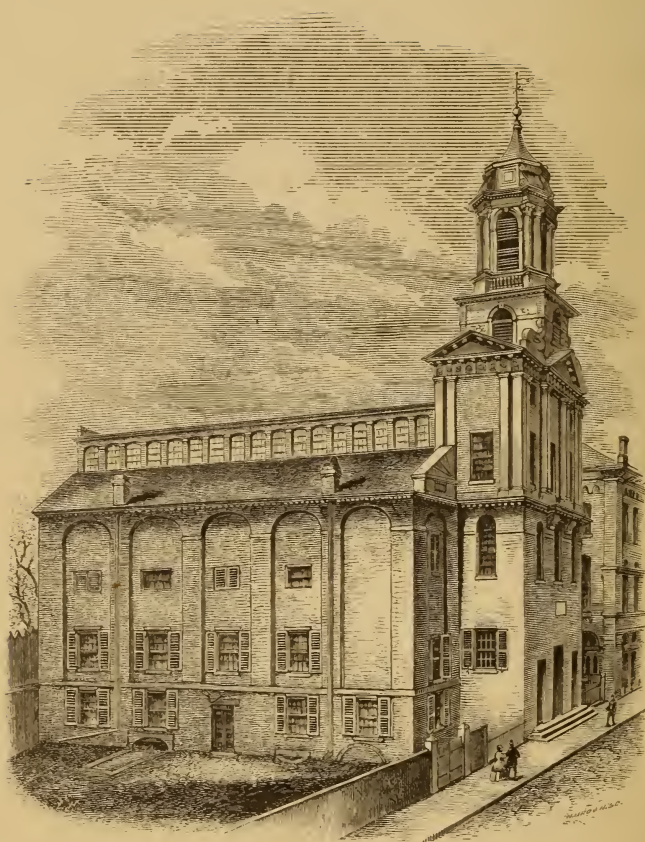
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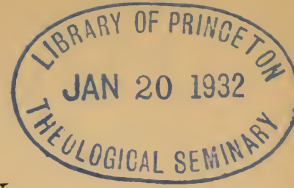
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CHAUNCY-PLACE CHURCH. 1808-1868.



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S E R M O N.

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.”—Ps. xxvi. 8.

AT the annual meeting of the First Church and Congregation, in what was then known as the Old Brick Meeting-House, on the 14th of July, 1807, votes were passed and a committee appointed with a view to the building of the house of worship where we are gathered to-day for the last time. The committee consisted of David Tilden, James Morrill, Peter C. Brooks, John Joy, Charles Paine, George Blanchard, and Samuel Torrey. Mr. Ashur Benjamin was selected to be the architect. In those days it was still customary for the body of communicants to act independently of the congregation at large, and the property of the society must be conveyed by the deacons: accordingly, at a church meeting held on the 7th of September, 1807, the deacons were authorized to alienate and dispose of the Old Brick Meeting-House, as might seem just and expedient; and it was further *Voted*, That, in the opinion of the Church, four pews in the new house should be

retained, to be let to persons, who might not be able to buy, and occupied under the direction of the deacons.

By the 21st of July, 1808, this place of worship was completed ; and on that day, Rev. William Emerson, the pastor, preached the sermon of dedication. It was not the will of God that he should long occupy the new pulpit. His earthly ministry and his earthly life came to an end on the evening of Sunday, the 12th of May, 1811. Until the 14th of July, 1813, the day of the ordination of Mr. John L. Abbot, the church was without a pastor ; and Mr. Abbot had scarcely entered upon his work when he was brought down by a sickness, which ended in his death, Oct. 17, 1814. Mr. N. L. Frothingham was installed as his successor, March 15, 1815 ; and continued, as you know, to perform the duties of pastor until March 10, 1850. On the fourth of May of 1853, the charge was committed to the present minister.

During the year 1843, the house of worship was completely remodelled, the congregation being hospitably received, from the 11th of June to the 26th of November, in King's Chapel ; whilst the pulpit of the Chapel, vacant then on account of the illness and subsequent death of Dr. Greenwood, was occupied by your own pastor.

At the annual meeting of the male communicants of the church, held at the house of the pastor, May

28, 1865, one of the members urged, in a very earnest way, a removal from what had become a business locality, and the erection of a new house of worship in a place of habitations. His views were warmly seconded; and step by step, almost without a dissenting voice, delayed only by the hope of a change in the financial condition of the country, we have been brought to these last Sunday services. The beautiful chapel of our new house of prayer awaits our coming, and will suffice, we trust, during the summer dispersion; and we must take leave of the old, which yet is scarcely old, — which indeed, even for our country and times, is only of yesterday.

Threescore years make up the short continuance of this house of worship, whilst even in this brief period the building has been thoroughly refashioned, and soon not a vestige of it will remain. The tide of traffic, like the waves of the sea, wears away the stones and strong walls of our dwellings and of our sanctuaries. Born and schooled almost within the shadow of these walls, I have seen a considerable part of the neighborhood rebuilt more than once. One of the first to enter the adjoining school-house, I have observed with many schoolmates its last day. Short as its time has been, our church has already outlasted three houses of worship in our immediate vicinity; and though these walls sprung up from a pasture, and by the side of an almost rural street of gardens and trees, we find ourselves already in the midst of

great warehouses and noisy thoroughfares. I sincerely wish that it might have been otherwise; I sincerely hope that more abiding things are in store for the congregation: such changes are not good for us. They increase a restlessness which would be excessive in any circumstances, and break up pleasant and helpful associations; nevertheless, we must accept the situation, and amidst so much change use all the more diligence to strengthen what remains. I need not ask you, before we take up the ark of our better covenant, and bear it on to our new tabernacle, to give a few moments to the past, to so much of it at least as is not altogether dead, — the deeply planted roots which bear up the fresh branches of what we would fain regard as a tree of life; the faces and forms that have not yet faded; the voices with which the air still vibrates; the memories that have not lost their fragrance in all these years. Let us claim our hour of quietness and thoughtfulness before the keys shall be put into the hands that wait to work the easy work of destruction.

This church was consecrated in the days of Kirkland, Buckminster, and Channing. Of Kirkland it may perhaps be truly said, that the charm of the man has survived any fame which the preacher may have enjoyed in his day; and that at the best he was only the earnest of the good things in store for those who should gather in the churches on Brattle Square and Federal Street, to listen to the words of men who

seemed to have been taught anew by the ever-proceeding Spirit. The religious sentiment of Boston had for many years been prevailingly liberal, — what would be characterized as Arminian; the churches had been pretty thoroughly uncalvinized, men could hardly tell how or when; and, if the old words were still everywhere spoken, much of the old meaning had gone out from them. It was not an altogether satisfactory estate for a Christian church. I hope it is not a scandal to say, that the old fervors had died out with the old forms of faith; and that, of those who came together on the Lord's Day, many could hardly tell wherefore they were come, save it might be because it was the Lord's Day. There was more than the usual amount of routine preaching and routine hearing. We were not moving, as now, steadily and strongly towards realities. But a better day was at hand. With Buckminster and Channing the preacher's vocation came into new honor, and the word of God, as it went forth from their lips, was gladly, eagerly heard. Those were living men, — men of thought, imagination, culture, men of rich and religious natures, men of faith, hope, charity; and the roots that seemed to have waxed old in the earth, and the stocks that seemed to have died in the ground, at the scent of that water of life put forth and blossomed again. Religion and human life met together, — the religion that ever comes down out of the heavens, and no man knoweth whence it comes or how it

comes; the life of the human reason, that candle of the Lord; of the human conscience, that voice of the Lord; of the human heart, that inspiration and fullness of the Lord, full and yet consumed with its mighty hunger. It was no more a decent observance in the line of old traditions; it was no more a Sunday lesson, to be characterized only as characterless, as not Orthodox, as not fanatical; it was no more a prayer to be "made," a homily to be read. It was a message from heaven; it was a man of God speaking to the children of God, in the name of the dear Son of God. The Congregational body had not yet been divided; but the day of separation was near, when churches and ministers were to go apart for a time at least, — only for a time, we trust, — not, alas! without strife and debate; when disintegration and individualism were to be the order of the day, and many should ask very anxiously sometimes, and none should be able to tell, whereunto this thing would grow, which comes to us in the name of Christianity, and yet seems sometimes to threaten the very life of Christianity.

Whilst there has been not a little to perplex and disappoint, not a little eccentric and extreme movement, not a little crudity and absurdity one way and another, we may still say that in these threescore years the life in which true Christians live has been coming down out of heaven from God, a deeper and a more blessed tide; our Christianity has been grow-

ing less and less conventional, more and more real. If by some it is more openly challenged, it is by others more heartily loved and recognized as the world's dearest hope. These sixty years have done something to put it in clearer relations to other divine gifts and providences, nothing to unsettle the rock foundations upon which it rests, and will rest for ever. If in these last years the world has grown strong, if luxury has increased and temptations to live unto the senses have been greatly multiplied, so have the congregations of Christ grown stronger to resist and overcome evil. I trust that in this time this church also has been increased with the increase of God, and goes out hence stronger than it came in. I do not speak of numbers. My predecessor, in his touching farewell discourse, describes the congregation, a few years after the consecration of this house, as thinned somewhat by discontents, and more by an unusual number of deaths, and adds that afterwards it slowly grew to be stronger; but when, having been without a pastor for three years, it came under my care, I found it again reduced,—only some ninety families at the most. We number now only twenty or thirty more: but I hope that the word here is not without a power which numbers do not indicate; that here there are hands, if not many, yet manly, to bear up and bear on the Ark of God; if not many, yet faithful to nurse the Lamp of Life, and keep it brightly burning.

There are still amongst us those whose childish eyes looked upon the former house, and who sat as children in this place of prayer, it may be on the day of its dedication ; but these are few indeed, whilst so many have gone, born children of the church, or gathered into our household from without. Myself comparatively a new-comer, I am but poorly fitted to bring back into these seats the worshippers whose places know them no more ; who kept their last Sunday once, not because the house was to be changed, but because they were to be changed. I do not care to name any of them, — certainly not to choose out any who have been specially dear to me, or who, however justly, were accounted famous men. The kingship and queenship of the Christian are often hidden under very humble disguises ; and many have been highly esteemed of God, of whom the world might well ask, were their names to be spoken, Who, then, were they ? “ Behold all souls are mine,” saith God ; and as souls they came into this house of God, alike and at one in this, however widely apart in the accidents of our being and our condition. As souls they shall be commemorated. For nearness to God in Christ, whether they always knew it and felt it or no, they came here, and he was near to them even when they were not near to him ; and it shall be enough that in his book their names are all written. But whilst the thought that this has been God’s house checks the lips that are framing themselves to name

the names of his children, it at the same time reminds us how rich have been the experiences of these children during these years of prayer. As the sun of the coming summer shall bring out the earth's treasure, so in nearness to God life is brought into light, and made inexpressibly venerable and beautiful. Precious thoughts of God in minds striving to be born into a clear consciousness of him; love of hearts that know that they shall live for ever, — live because God lives and is their Father, live because Christ lives and is their brother; the fruitful sorrow of the truly penitent; visions of the heavenly kingdom on earth; new commandments, not from the Christ who is gone, but from the Christ in the midst of us and within us, to love one another, seeing that the God in whose presence we are is love, — these consecrate the walls; these make them beautiful, though they may lack any other beauty; these quicken the pulse; these deepen and soften the tones of the voice, even when we pass within the doors on a week-day, and will not suffer us, without many regrets, to resign them to week-day uses.

It may be a compensation to be set over against the mischiefs of such frequent changes, that the last hours in the old house come laden with the benedictions of numberless sabbaths. How distinctly we can recall some of those sabbaths! On that day the fountains of the great deep in our hearts were broken up, on that day the heavens were opened for us, on that day

the mystery of our life was revealed a little, and that sweet brightness has never quite faded from our sky. They say that even common sunlight paints pictures upon the walls of our dwellings, photographs the life that we are living; and that the impressions, however invisible to our poor senses, are all the while there. If it be so, what are the paintings which your artists can spread upon wall or window of the house of worship, compared with those which have been painted there already as by the finger of God, — real altar pictures, waiting, as in some old churches, until the curtain shall be drawn aside, and they shall become again a part of the marvel and the hope of our life. As we gather here for the last time, we are set in the train and by the side of those whom we have accompanied, week by week, in their walk to this holy place, but sought for one day in vain in the familiar seat; whilst the voice of praise became the voice of submission, to chant the words, “Thy will be done,” and the prayer in memory of the dead and for the help of the living was prayed, and the world which now is and the world which is to come became as one world for our dear remembrance and our fond hopes, and here, as there, there was no night. If ever we have vowed a vow in this place, and the payment, certainly for a disciple of Christ, hath been but scant and grudging, we say, The house shall not be dismantled before that sacred debt has been discharged to the uttermost farthing. The beams to be presently torn from their

places plead with us that they may not be accounted more steadfast than we. From the foundation to headstone, pulpit, pews, the table upon which the feast of the Lord has been spread, the carved wood that has held up the baptismal bowl, the organ that was brought across the seas for our use, and this which stands to-day in its stead ; the bell that hath summoned the worshippers, — all, all were set apart from ordinary and common uses for the glory and the service of God in Christ, and that there might be yet another place on earth of which He could say, “ My name shall be there.” Let them answer these high and holy occasions until the very last : it is easy to consecrate what has already been so consecrated, easier to keep than to invite the Holy Presence ; and our earnest resolves can so hallow even this house, which shall presently be a heap of ruins, that we shall eagerly come and bear away some fragment from the pile, to be handed down as a precious relic, — a bit of rubbish to the rest of mankind, but for our eyes a fragment of the house where once and again, as was written of Jacob, the angels of God met us. You cannot quite desecrate what has been really consecrated. These walls will give place to other walls ; but there are those for whom this spot will ever be covered only by the old house of prayer, the old Chauncy-Place Church, and associated for ever with some very deep and sacred joy, or with some sorrow which our faith made a blessedness. For myself, as the time for our

departure has drawn nearer and nearer, I am less and less willing to go. I was sorry when I found that our stay must be shortened by only so much as a week. I am thankful that it is no part of my duty to disturb the headstone of the old building, as it was to aid in placing the corner-stone of the new. I am sorry that I ever assented when they called the church gloomy. I am glad that the sun shines through it to-day. I shall try not to be near when the first axe falls upon the old timbers. I cannot refrain from rebuilding and repeopling the neighborhood where all my childhood was spent. That Thursday lecture bell still sounds in my ears: I see a few elect women passing quietly into the scantily filled church, whilst, I am compelled to add, the little group of ministers still lingers upon the sidewalk and in the porch. We boys in the adjoining school are cautioned against boisterous play whilst the service is going forward. Well, the last changes will presently be made; the old homesteads are almost all gone; the gardens, which at this season began to blossom, and send forth, even in the city, a "wonderful smell," have shrunk into areas, or disappeared beneath brick and stone; the church which gave its name to the green, and received it from the green again, is a shapeless ruin, signalled by a broken spire that keeps watch still over the great bare rafters, brought, they tell us, all the way from Maine by land during war time; the boys have left the school-house, and we are here for our last day. A

fair and stately building, which shall fitly symbolize and shelter our faith, awaits us. But such work as we have had grace to do has been done here; here we have prayed God join heart to heart, as hand has been joined to hand; here we have brought the little child for baptism; here we have paused on our way to the grave, that we might cast the burden of our bereavement upon the Lord, the Presence hath been here, and the glory has not been lifted from this house, and our hearts are in the old places. Yet we must go forth; bearing with us, thank God, in our heart of hearts, all that hath made the place venerable and beautiful; not going out desolate from a desolation, still journeying and hoping to abide with Him who is at once guardian and dwelling-place in all generations, and without whom we are homeless indeed. These houses of prayer are only for a day at the longest. It is the temple of God, which temple we are, the house not made with hands, that it most concerns us to be ever a-building, to see that no stone of it be thrown down, and none of its adornings disfigured. All, save that building of God, is but the scaffolding of time, and no part of our everlasting being.

On the 8th of May, fifteen years ago, I conducted your worship for the first time as your minister, having been installed on the previous Wednesday; and I seem to have come to-day to the close of a ministry. I cannot refrain from drawing a line here between the thing which hath been and the thing which shall

be. Until the very last, I had hoped that my honored predecessor and kind parishioner would have been able to obey the dear wish of his heart, and have raised his voice or taken his place, or at least have appeared by some word which I could have read to you, in the old familiar place. But the dear Father, who asks of him in these days of outward darkness and feebleness chiefly submission, — asks it and receives it, — has not so willed it. Our hearts are with him as he sits apart in his dwelling, as his heart is with us in this house of prayer, the place of his ministering during so many years. And as from our hearts there goes up an earnest petition that his strength may be as his day, so he sends his wishes, which are prayers, that “the best blessings may attend you and the congregation, as the old tabernacle takes its new place.” To his “Lord be with you,” our response shall be now and ever, “And with thy spirit.” He has summed up his five-and-thirty years of service in a farewell discourse, which constitutes the larger part of the interior record of this house. A few words upon my own past may properly enough fill up that record.

“Let a man so account of us,” writes Paul, “as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” If, in the progress of human knowledge, and the complications of modern civilization, each chief profession and occupation is distributed into distinct departments known as specialties, surely the ministerial calling may be regarded as specialty enough for

one poor brain and heart. Let a man so account of us, not as a lecturer upon all branches of science and learning, or as society's man-of-all-work, but as set apart to live in thought, in feeling, in all outward applications, the life of Christ, who alone hath been found perfect on earth. This *one* thing I do. It is large enough. There is some ground to hope for a measure of success in this. The people do not want from their ministers lectures, which could only be shallow and crude, in every department of human inquiry; but they have a right to ask that the minister of Christ shall be a proficient in his own department, and shall try to learn what is the mind of Christ, and how his truth is to be translated into daily life. His usefulness and acceptableness in the long-run will depend upon his steadfast devotion to his chosen work. The river which has no banks is no *river*: it only converts the country on one side and the other into a swamp, in which men hopelessly flounder. Of course I do not mean that the preacher is to deal in abstractions. Christianity is no abstraction; and it gathers its illustrations from every quarter, it brings its great law and spirit to guide all our works, public and private: but in the hands of its servants the axe is laid at the roots of the tree. The minister has his word to say about public affairs, — but as a minister, not as a partisan; rather in setting forth the great ends which he is bound to recognize, than in recommending measures, parties, and men, and handling matters about which

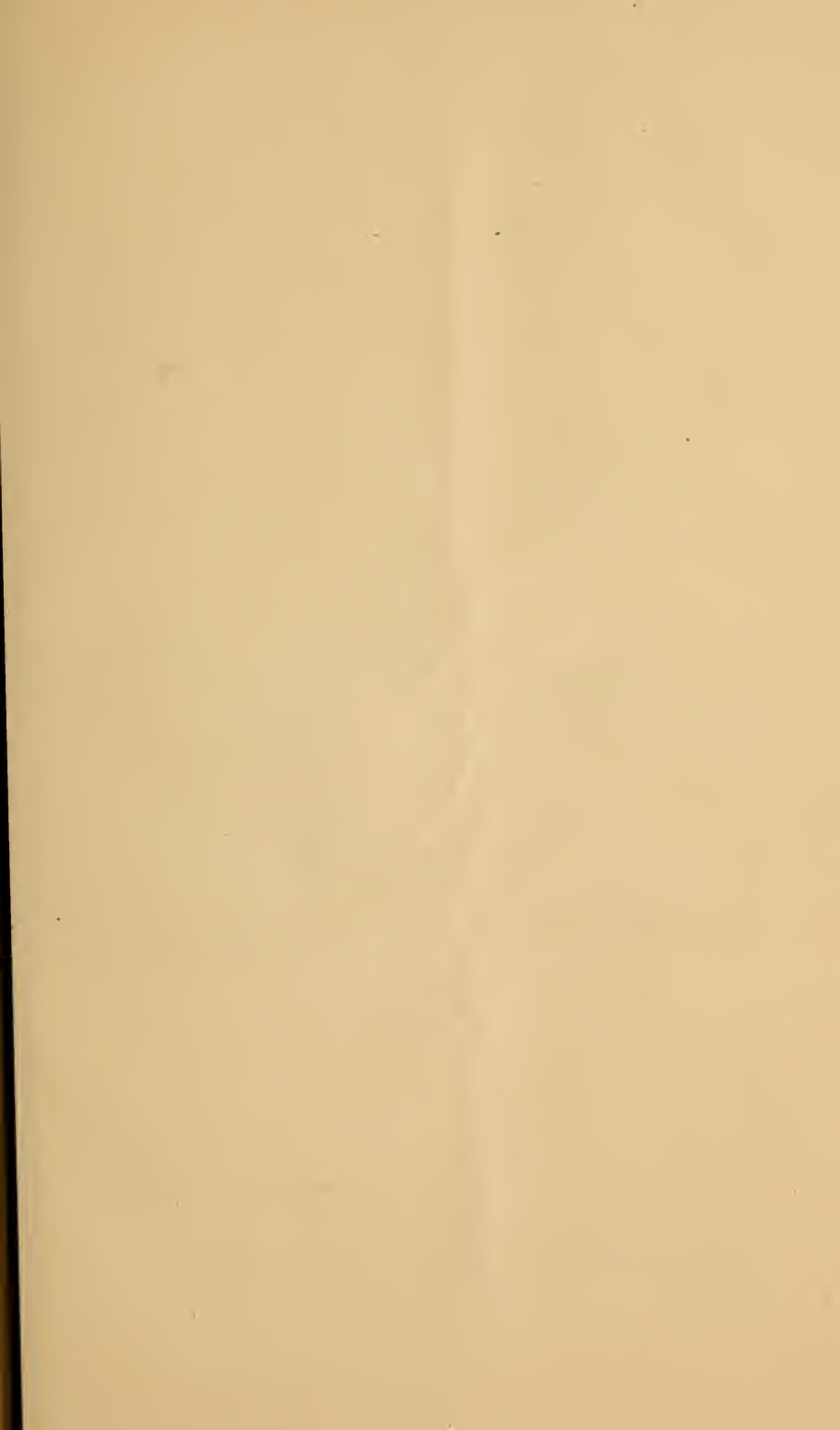
equally earnest Christians may differ. The Christian preacher has a word about science, especially in its relations to faith ; and, if he be a man of real faith, all nature will be to him, and through him to those who hear him, a revelation of God. And the Christian preacher has a word about society, its ideal, and everlasting aims ; but I think that, if his sermons become scientific dissertations or political harangues, they will be poor dissertations and harangues, and not sermons at all. A young, unpractised writer hopes sometimes to succeed in his composition, by covering a large surface. He finds at length that a single point firmly grasped, thoroughly studied, and fully illustrated, is what he wants. The gospel is rich unto all who will explore it and dig down into it, and with the heart as well as with the understanding declare it. The Spirit ever breathes upon the word, and brings new truths to light. If congregations grow weary of Christianity, and ask, instead, for philosophy, or political economy, or partisan oratory, or semi-sacred concerts, it is because the preacher has been a poor steward of the manifold mysteries of God in Christ, and has not learned and taught what it is to be a Christian and to do a Christian's work, — what that life is of which it is written, that it is hidden with God in Christ, — hidden, and yet to be manifested in all works and charities, the only redemption of man and of human society. Of my poor efforts to do this work, He that judgeth must be the Lord. Not of man's

judgment — or as Paul wrote more significantly, of man's *day* — can the minister be judged ; but this last time may have a record of the work of the congregation in these last years, and it need not be withheld because it is a good record. Paul said, "I know nothing by myself ;" which is old and obsolete English for *against* myself. I shall say, "I know nothing *by* my congregation," — against my congregation. I have a right to say of you, that you have done in these years some genuine Christian work, — work which will abide ; work according to the patterns which the Divine Preacher showed to the world in the Sermon on the Mount, and illustrated in his own living and dying. Your Christianity has been a practical Christianity ; not a private luxury, but a blessing for all who chose to be partakers in it. You have been found of those who did not and could not seek you. Within these old walls and in our not very sightly schoolrooms you have well begun and vigorously carried forward Christian works, which, should they fail in our new circumstances, instead of abounding more and more, the beautiful church which awaits us would be only the splendid tomb of our once living Christianity. For one thing, at least, the old Chauncy-street Church will be remembered, as the place where the street boys were taught, until the city fathers provided schools for them. I believe that you have a right to live, because you have something to live for, — a Christian ideal to realize, a Christian work to do in this

city, over which the watchmen wake in vain, unless the Lord, through his faithful servants, doth keep it. And since it is the last time, and may therefore have some indulgences, let me bear witness to that loving loyalty, and unceasing helpfulness, and exceeding tolerance of my exceeding individualism and Christian independence, which have left the pastor no way of explaining any want of success, save his own shortcomings. God forgive me if I have ever uttered a word of complaint, or fixed my eyes for so much as a moment upon a speck in so bright a sky. I know that I am grateful for the love which I hope to find again in the heavens, which I find now on earth ; and that, whatever may be in the future, a past to be recalled only in thankfulness, a past without averted looks, sharp criticisms, closed hands, a past of genuine and abounding Christian friendliness in deed as well as in word, — is for ever sure. You have earned the right to be better served whenever it seems to you that better service must be had. But I must not linger, unwilling as I am to say the last words of this last sermon. Were I to keep on all day, I should be no more ready to stop than I am now. So farewell to the old house ; and may He who led his people across the seas, and has gone with them from sanctuary to sanctuary, go forth with them from this place also. For a short time we shall be a little straitened outwardly, and yet our new condition will have its advantages. It may help to break down all barriers

between Christian and Christian, bringing us nearer to each other, — hand to hand, eye to eye, heart to heart, that, when the doors of the great church open to receive us, we may be a Christian household indeed, having life, the life of love, in itself, and therefore the principle of growth. So may the Lord, who is the Lord, not of the dead, but of the living, abide with us evermore, until we come into that world where there is no temple.







OLD BRICK. 1713-1808.

APPENDIX.

MR. WILLIAM HAYDEN, one of the oldest members of First Church, and for a long time chairman of the Standing Committee, writes as follows of the "Old Brick" and of the property on Summer Street:—

"I remember the old church, then familiarly known as the 'Old Brick,' which occupied the present position of Joy's Building, on Cornhill Square. I attended church there, in company with my parents, from 1800 up to 1808, when it was taken down; and its external and internal structure are well remembered, even to the pew which we occupied. The noise and the dust of the great thoroughfare—now Washington Street, then Cornhill—was, even then, so great as to render the location unsuitable as a place of worship, and the project of removal to Summer Street was agitated. The change, though determined upon by the majority, was vehemently opposed by some of the worshippers, and, among others, by the Hon. Benjamin Austin, a well-known political leader of the Democratic party, and editor of the "Chronicle," the Democratic organ of those days. He was the father of Charles Austin, who was killed by Selfridge, in State Street, in 1806. Mr. Austin's opposition to the removal of the church extended so far as to lead him to terminate his connection with it, and I think he never attended at Chauncy Place. He wrote some verses bewailing the fate of the old church, of which the first two lines are all that I remember, running thus:—

'Farewell, Old Brick, — Old Brick, farewell;
You bought your minister, and sold your bell.'

The 'buying the minister' is in allusion to the fact, that the First Church paid the town of Harvard, where the Rev. Mr. Emerson

was first settled, a sum of money, to induce that town to release him to them.

“The estate on which the church, now about to be demolished, was erected, in the years 1807 and 1808, was owned by the proprietors of the First Church a long time before they had any thought of erecting a church upon it. The estate was conveyed by deed by Richard Hollingshead, and Ann Hollingshead, his wife, both making their marks, unto ‘Robert Sanderson and Henry Alline, deacons of the First Church of Christ in Boston.’ The deed is dated ‘this seventeenth day of December, Anno Dom’i one thousand six hundred and eighty, and in the thirty-second year of the reign of King Charles the Second over England.’ The estate, which had a boundary of 131 feet on the street known to us as Summer Street, is described, in this ancient deed, as being butted and bounded by the street or highway (no name given), *‘lying and being at the southerly end of the Town of Boston.’*

“The premises conveyed by this instrument now constitute four valuable estates on Summer Street, next above Chauncy Street, — the valuable church-lot which has just been sold; the School-house lot, lately occupied by Messrs. Thayer and Cushing; and all that part of Chauncy Street contiguous to the property. It would be an ample fortune to any person who owned it now; and yet the Hollingsheads, who conveyed it to the church, were paupers. They describe themselves, in the deed, as, ‘by the Providence of God, both preserved to a state of old age, which is attended with many weaknesses and infirmities, whereby wee are made incapable of labor, or providing for our own livelihood or subsistence.’ They were members of the church; and the church agreed to do, to the end of their lives, what it had done for some time before, — to provide them a support. I have heard, traditionally, in my younger days, from older members of the congregation, that, when the church took the property, it was considered of so little value, that it was quite doubtful whether it was worth the expense of drawing and recording the deed.

“A century later, there stood upon the premises a wooden house, standing end to the street, with a large garden and orchard, occupied as the parsonage. There lived, in his day, the Rev. Dr. Chauncy, and afterwards the Rev. William Emerson. The writer of these lines has been in the house during the occupancy

of Mr. Emerson, and remembers it and its amiable occupant well."

BUILDING OF HOUSE OF WORSHIP IN CHAUNCY PLACE.

As the Temple in Jerusalem "got itself builded," to use the favorite phrase of the day, without noise of workman's tools, so somehow the house of worship in Chauncy Place rose without much calling of meetings or passing of votes. Mr. Benjamin seems to have been told to look after things; and he did. Church and congregation combined covered only some seven pages of the record with their action,—raising an inquiry, in one instance, about some doubtful bricks; suggesting a steeple, should the foundation of the tower already laid seem to admit of it; adding a word about the ground to be left in front of the houses on Summer Street; but for the rest leaving every thing to Mr. Joy and Mr. Benjamin. The church, in their vote, speak of the deacons as appointed with the committee of pew-holders for building the new house; but in the record of the proprietors it is not so written.

At the church meeting only eight persons, including the pastor, were present.

PEW TAXES.

The taxes upon the pews ranged from 17 to 34 cents per week, the whole amount being \$36.63; the pastor's salary was twenty-five dollars a week, and twenty-eight cords of wood (afterwards commuted for \$125 per annum), with the parsonage on the corner of Summer Street and Chauncy Place. Out of 134 pews, 114 were owned and occupied at the opening of the new house. "The Theological Library" was placed in the vestry.

DEATH OF REV. WILLIAM EMERSON.

"*Lord's Day*, May 12, 1811. — This day, at forty-five minutes past seven in the evening, our respected and beloved friend, Rev.

William Emerson, died, aged 42 years. He was installed pastor of the First Church, Oct. 16, 1799, having been previously the minister of Harvard, Mass."

At this time the tomb of the society in the chapel burying-ground was repaired, and Mr. Emerson's remains there repose. This tomb is near the Savings Bank and the front wall.

ORDINATION OF MR. JOHN L. ABBOT.

"The members composing the Ecclesiastical Council, with the professors, tutors, and residents of Harvard University, also the Episcopal clergy and Baptist ministers of the town, with all the clergy of the Boston Association, with a large number of invited guests, and the proprietors of pews in First Church, dined at Concert Hall. The whole was conducted with decency and in order.

SAMUEL BRADFORD, *Clerk*."

Mr. Abbot died at Andover, Mass., Oct. 17, 1814. His funeral was attended at First Church, Friday, Oct. 23, Mr. Edward Everett preaching the sermon, which was printed. Mr. Abbot officiated only upon very few occasions, but the affections of the society seem even so to have been much drawn out towards him.

CALL OF MR. N. L. FROTHINGHAM.

"Dec. 25, 1814. — *Voted*, That Mr. N. L. Frothingham be requested to preach four sabbaths from and after the first sabbath in January next."

He was chosen by a unanimous vote, Jan. 26, 1815; the salary to be twenty-five dollars per week, and twenty-five cords of wood, with the parish house.

It was the custom at this time to collect the taxes quarterly, by passing the boxes in the church.

ORGANS AND CHOIRS.

An organ, voted in 1809, arrived from London in the ship "Restitution," June 16, 1816; was received into the

vestry on the 19th, and used for the first time on the 30th. This organ was replaced by a new instrument built by Appleton, which was first used, Sunday, Nov. 26, 1843.

At the annual meeting, May 26, 1823, Mr. D. L. Gibbens called the attention of the proprietors to the state of the choir; observing that it seemed necessary to have a singing school, in order to bring forward such persons as feel an inclination to succeed our present very excellent choristers, who may from time to time be obliged to leave the seats, and to whose gratuitous and generous services he paid a becoming compliment. Steps were taken for training a choir, and for paying a female singer and organist.

ACT OF INCORPORATION.

This bears date, "The year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine." The proprietors seem to have been moved to obtain this act by the refusal of the deacons (a refusal afterwards withdrawn) to sign the deed of the vacant lot on the south side of the church, which the Standing Committee had sold to Mr. Gideon F. Thayer for \$1.77½ cents a foot. The records show that there was a good deal of feeling in the matter. An opinion was obtained from Hon. Charles P. Curtis as to the corporate powers of the society, which was what was termed a "Poll Parish." So far as the present writer understands the opinion, it would appear that the property vested in the deacons. Nevertheless the proprietors voted, July 29, 1828, before their incorporation, respectfully to request the signatures of these officers; but in case they should continue to decline, to execute the deed themselves, or in some way to complete the sale.

Would it not have been well if the deacons had been even more decided? or if in some other way the sale might not have been consummated?

A new pulpit was placed in the church during this year,

and on Christmas the house was used for services by the congregation of Trinity Church.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Mention of a Sunday school is first made as follows :—

“ *Committee Meeting*, Aug. 13, 1828. — *Voted*, That, if application be made for the vestry to be used for a Sunday school, the disposal thereof be left with the minister and deacons.”

From which it appears, that a portion of the scholars, at least, were to come from without the parish. In 1833, this school is referred to in the record as having applied for thirty dollars' worth of books. From the letter of Rev. Dr. Frothingham, we learn that it was originally an offset from the Franklin Sunday school; and that, at the time named, two-thirds of the scholars and one-half of the teachers belonged to First Church. The object is commended, and the money was voted; although it was the opinion of the committee, that the multiplication of books in such a school is absolutely hurtful. It was not the age of semi-religious novelettes. An annual twenty-five dollars for the time to come was considered sufficient.

DEACON JAMES MORRILL

Died on the third day of April, 1833, aged 82; having been forty-three years in office.

“THE CHRISTIAN PSALTER.”

A collection of hymns prepared by Rev. Dr. William P. Lunt, of Quincy, was introduced into the services of the church, on the second Sunday of February, 1842, in place of Dr. Belknap's “Psalms and Hymns.”

CHURCH FUNDS.

During the year 1842, an inquiry was instituted by the proprietors as to the funds held for the church, as a body

of communicants, by the deacons. The reply shows that there were such funds, and that they were held for pious and charitable uses, and were not regarded as in any way subject to the supervision of the proprietors; and the inquiry was allowed to subside. An account of these funds is annually given by the deacons to the communicant members.

REMODELLING OF HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

The house of worship seems hardly to have been satisfactory from the first. As early as March 12, 1815, there were plans proposed for altering the main entrance, and the ornaments about the pulpit; and the sum of nine hundred dollars was spent in this way during the year.

The changes during 1843 amounted almost to a reconstruction of the whole interior. It was only stipulated, that the pillars supporting the galleries should not be removed. The plan proposed, that all the light for the church should come in through a ceiling of glass, which was itself the floor of a vast glazed attic. The side windows were walled up; but it was found necessary to reopen them beneath the galleries, so that the result was not as satisfactory as had been hoped. The entrances to the building were altered at this time, and the pulpit carried back into a recess prepared for the purpose, and subsequently furnished with spiral stairs of iron, connecting the church and vestry. These changes cost from ten to twelve thousand dollars. Could sufficient light have been admitted through the roof, the arrangement would have been very agreeable. As it was, the house was often dark, though not more so than many other churches. At times the ventilation was complained of; but it is believed without reason, as compared with other public buildings.

NEWSBOYS' SCHOOL.

Oct. 30, 1861.—The use of the front basement was granted for a Newsboys' School, under the direction and at the expense of a lady of the parish. A summer vacation school has been maintained for two summers in the same place, through the same instrumentality.

REV. DR. FROTHINGHAM'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Bears date, Dec. 19, 1849. The correspondence between the society and the pastor is appended to Dr. Frothingham's farewell sermon, preached March 10, 1850.

DEACON JAMES H. FOSTER

Died Wednesday, Dec. 10, 1862, at the advanced age of 89, having served the church in his office since March 5, 1815.

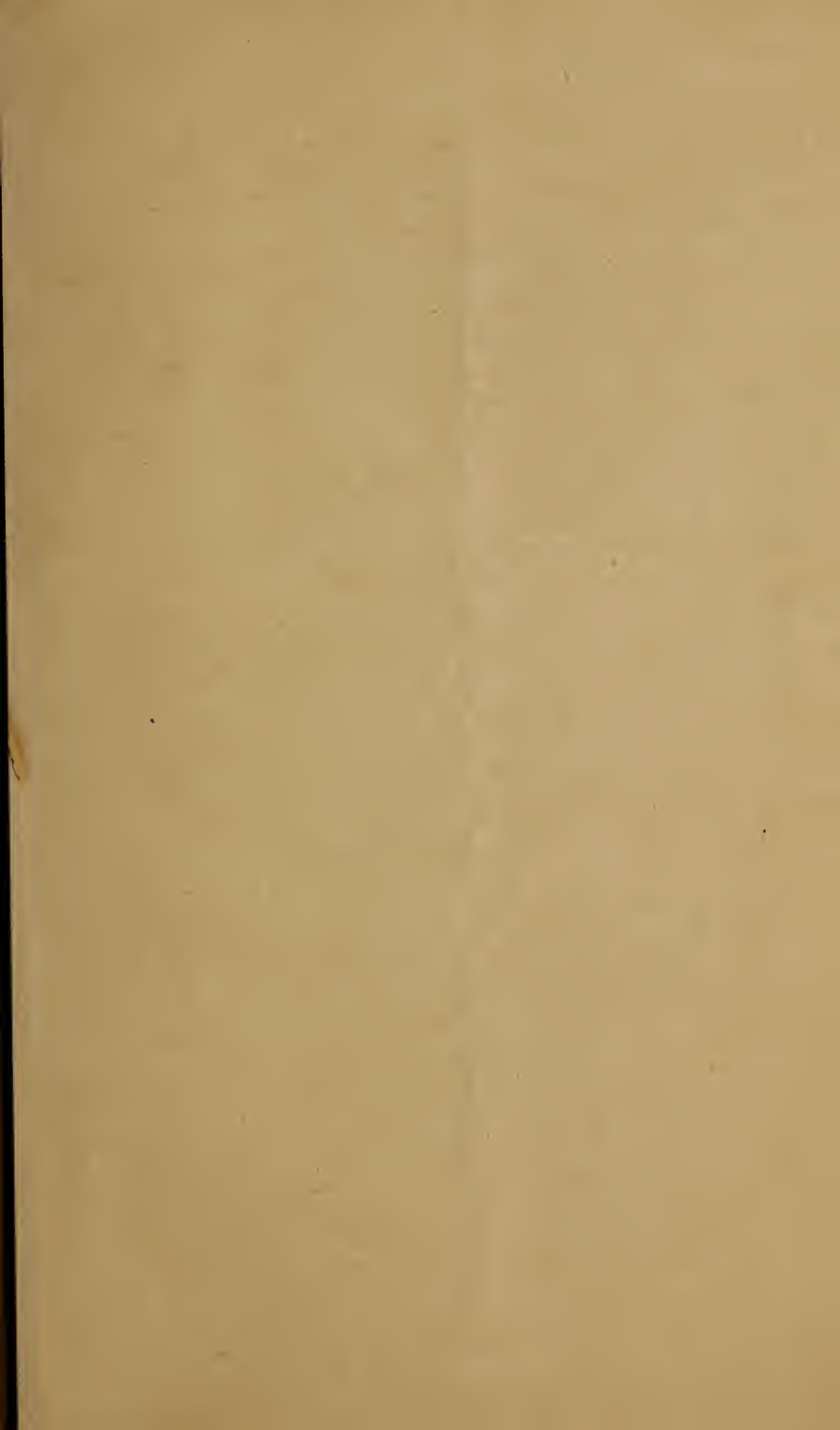
LAST SERVICES

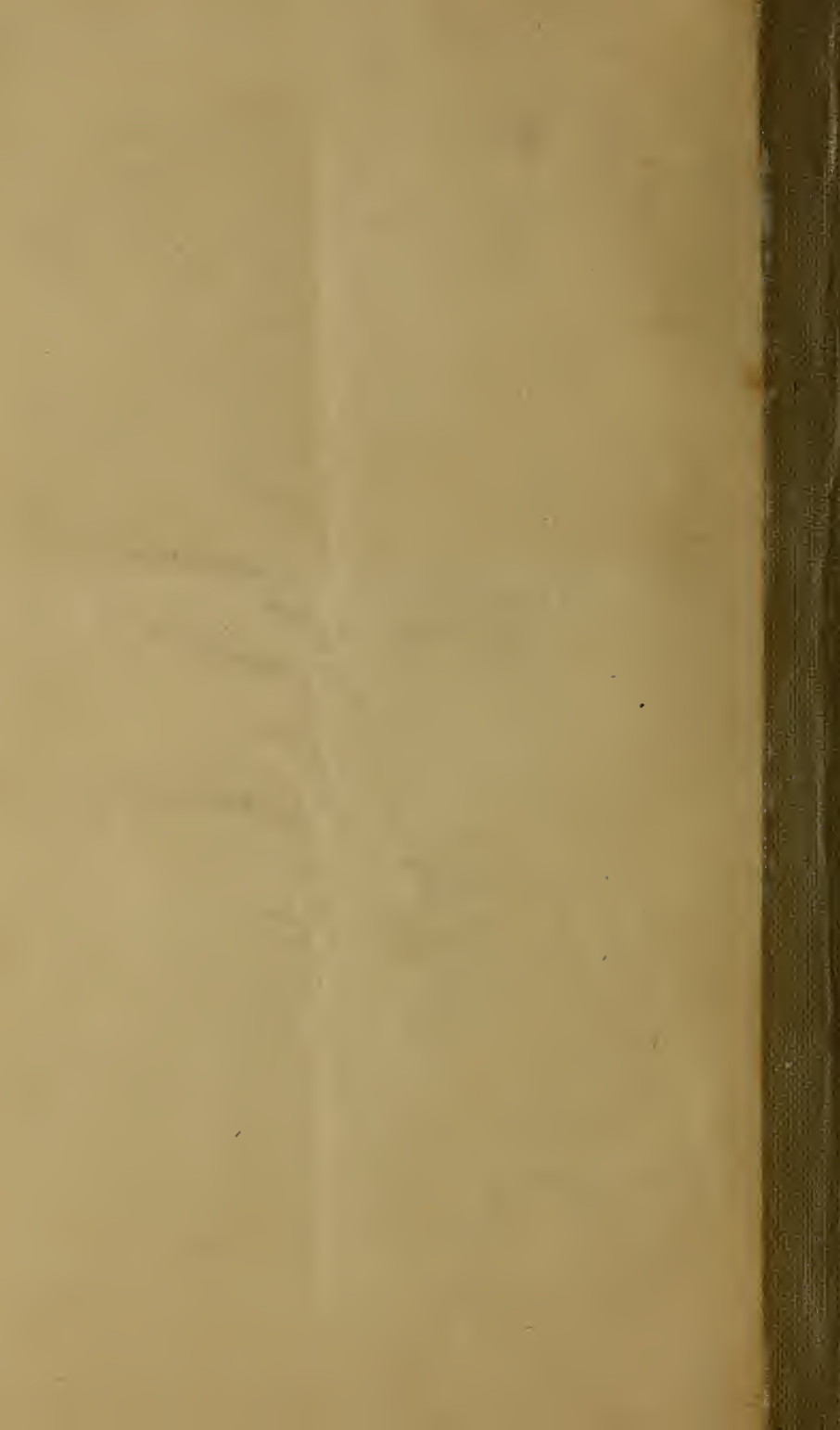
Were held, May 10, 1868, in the morning. They were conducted by the pastor, according to the use of the church. The audience was large, and many former worshippers took part. "How lovely are thy dwellings fair" was sung before the sermon, and the congregation united at the close in "From all that dwell below the skies." In the afternoon there were no services, but many of the congregation came to the house to pass yet a few moments within the old walls. On the Monday following, the work of removing the church furniture was begun.

SCRIPTURES READ AT THE FAREWELL SERVICES.

AND Moses said unto the Lord, See Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people : and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me . . . And the Lord said, My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence, for wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight ? Is it not in that Thou goest with us ? One generation passeth away and another generation cometh ; but the earth abideth for ever. The thing which hath been it is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done. When one buildeth and another pulleth down what profit have they then but labor ? To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to break down and a time to build up. A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof. Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children to such as keep his covenant. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors and thy foundations with sapphires, and all thy borders of pleasant stones and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be

fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God. The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. *Amen.*





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PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

